

San Diego County

Commission on Children Youth AND Families



ANNUAL REPORT 2003

***This Annual Report is dedicated to
Judge James R. Milliken
Commission Chair
1998 - 2003***

"Men make history, and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

-Harry S. Truman

Judge Milliken leaves a wondrous legacy of reform and innovation in the dependency and delinquency systems. In his five years in Juvenile Court, Judge Milliken continually sought ways to improve the lives of the families and children who appeared in his courtroom. In dependency court he instituted the Substance Abuse Recovery Management System (SARMS) aggressively treating substance abuse by parents and enforcing time lines for them to get their lives in order or risk losing their children. In Delinquency Drug Court he found youth who were not succeeding after drug treatment were often illiterate. Through his leadership and in partnership with Probation and the District Attorney he was able to institute a proven literacy program for wards at Juvenile Detention Facilities. For high school age foster youth he worked with the Board of Supervisors to open San Pasqual Academy, the county's boarding school for foster youth.

We thank him for his leadership and the progress he made possible in improving the lives of children, youth and families in San Diego.



Mission

To exercise leadership in advising the Board of Supervisors to set policy through identifying opportunities and impediments to providing accessible and quality services and fostering education and dialogue on issues affecting the well-being of children, youth and their families.

Vision

Through advocacy and leadership, each San Diego child will reach his/her full potential, by growing up in a family, school and community that is safe, healthy and nurturing.

2002-2003 Focus

To promote and create partnerships that connect families, schools and communities to support the well-being and success of children and youth.

Overview

The Board of Supervisors formed the Commission on Children, Youth and Families (Commission) in 1986 with the mandate of providing a leadership role in identifying and addressing the needs of children, youth and families who are either at-risk or in the public charge. In short, the Commission serves as a cross-agency and cross-sector resource, as well as a public forum, for all policy, programmatic and funding issues related to children, youth and families. The Commission advises the County Board of Supervisors and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Duties and Responsibilities

- ☐ To serve as an information resource to the Board of Supervisors and respond to requests on issues related to children, youth and families.
- ☐ To promote coordinated and collaborative efforts of public and private sector organizations engaged in services to children.
- ☐ To develop and make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and Chief Administrative Officer regarding children, youth and family issues and services.
- ☐ To provide a regional public forum for the discussion of issues relating to children, youth and families.
- ☐ To assist agencies and departments in the development of plans for services to children, youth and families.
- ☐ To assist appropriate departments in reviewing legislation relating to children, youth and family issues.
- ☐ To promote efforts such as decategorized, blended funding initiatives, and obtain categorical funding waivers, to increase local flexibility in funding and programming decisions related to children, youth and families.
- ☐ To promote prevention services and programs for children, youth and families.

Membership

The Commission has a membership of 41 voting individuals: 5 members at-large, 17 public officials, 10 nonprofit or non-governmental organizations, 6 regional collaborative representatives, and 3 consumers.

- ❖ Vacant, Supervisorial District One
- ❖ JoAnne Bushby, Supervisorial District Two
- ❖ Jeanette Day, Supervisorial District Three
- ❖ Debra Fitzgerald, Supervisorial District Four
- ❖ Katherine Smith-Brooks, Supervisorial District Five
- ❖ Honorable James R. Milliken, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court (Chair) (now retired)
- ❖ Supervisor Greg Cox, Board of Supervisors
- ❖ Rodger G. Lum, Ph.D., Director, Health and Human Services Agency (formerly)
- ❖ Nancy Bowen, M.D., Public Health Officer, Health and Human Services Agency
- ❖ David Cranford, Acting Chief Probation Officer
- ❖ Bill Kolender, Sheriff
- ❖ Bonnie Dumanis, District Attorney
- ❖ John Sansone, County Counsel
- ❖ Augustine Gallego, Chancellor, San Diego Community College District
- ❖ Rudy Castruita, Ed.D., County Superintendent of Schools
- ❖ Barbara Ryan, President, San Diego County School Board Association
- ❖ Cathy Trout, Director, Department of Housing and Community Development
- ❖ Debbie de los Santos, Regional Administrator, California Youth Authority
- ❖ Renée Bahl, Director, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department
- ❖ Terrell Salmon, Director, County of San Diego Farm and Home Advisor
- ❖ Sylvia Selverston, Chair, San Diego County Child Care Planning Council
- ❖ Sandy McBrayer, Executive Director, Children's Initiative
- ❖ Teresa Stivers, Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention Foundation
- ❖ Sharon Lawrence, Executive Director, Voices for Children
- ❖ Ana España, Representative, Office of the Public Defender
- ❖ George Cameron, Ed.D., Superintendent, National School District
- ❖ Raymond Peterson, M.D., Executive Director, San Diego Regional Center
- ❖ Margaret Iwanaga-Penrose, President/CEO, Union of Pan Asian Communities
- ❖ Nory Behana, Representative, San Diego Community Child Abuse Coordinating Council
- ❖ Vivian Reznik, M.D., Representative, American Academy of Pediatrics
- ❖ Alan Bersin, Superintendent, San Diego Unified School District
- ❖ Rev. Nancy Mitchell, Representative, Faith Community
- ❖ Riley McRae, Representative, Central Region Collaborative
- ❖ Debbie Comstock, Representative, East Region Collaborative
- ❖ Rachel Burnage, Representative, North Central Region Collaborative
- ❖ Patty Huerta, Representative, North Coastal Region Collaborative
- ❖ Brad Wiscons, Representative, North Inland Region Collaborative
- ❖ Mary Jo Buettner, Representative, South Region Collaborative
- ❖ Sandra Boelter, Consumer Representative
- ❖ Marjorie Musgrave, Consumer Representative
- ❖ Rita Naranjo, Consumer Representative

Committees

Executive Committee

Purpose: To provide direction to Commission staff and make interim decisions on issues that require timely action, and also to provide oversight to the SB 1352 Initiative and Signs of Support Program.

In April, the Commission held a Special Meeting on the State Budget Crises. Members developed a "Framework for Budget Decision Making" and forwarded the document to the Board of Supervisors. This year in compliance with Board Policy A-74, the Commission conducted a "Sunset Review," which was approved by the Board of Supervisors. As part of this process, the Commission held a retreat on October 10. At the retreat, members reviewed and recommended changes to the By-Laws, Ordinance, mission, and vision. The group brainstormed key areas to focus on for the next two years. The key areas identified are supporting child welfare redesign, systems accountability, and integrating the work of the Commission with other groups such as Children's Mental Health.

Committee Members:

Hon. James R. Milliken, Chair, Juvenile Court (now retired)
Augustine Gallego, Vice Chair, San Diego Community College District
Nan D'Anna, Secretary, San Diego Regional Center
JoAnne Bushby, Representative, Supervisorial District Two
David Cranford, Probation Department
Rodger Lum, Ph.D., Health and Human Services Agency (formerly)
Roseann Myers, Commission on Children, Youth and Families
Barbara Ryan, San Diego County School Board Association



Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Committee (CAPCC)

Purpose: CAPCC has specific mandates outlined in State and Welfare Institutions Code 18982:

- ☐ To provide a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child abuse cases.
- ☐ To promote public awareness of the abuse and neglect of children and the resources available for intervention and treatment.
- ☐ To encourage and facilitate training of professionals in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- ☐ To recommend improvements in services to families and victims.
- ☐ To encourage and facilitate community support for child abuse and neglect programs.

Monthly meetings consisted of a one-hour training or discussion topic followed by workgroup meetings.

JANUARY PRESENTATION: MANDATED REPORTING LAWS AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
Kevin Saluta, MSW, CPS Supervisor from the County of San Diego Child Abuse Hotline, gave an informative presentation on mandated reporting.

FEBRUARY PRESENTATION: CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE PROJECT
Sgt. Mark Foreman and Cynthia L. Kuelbs, MD gave an overview of the Immediate Response to Children Exposed to Violence (IRCEV) approach using multidisciplinary teams.

MARCH PRESENTATION: CHILD WELFARE REDESIGN
Lori Clark and Susan Strom explained the progress of the State of California Child Welfare Redesign project. As part of the Redesign Initiative, key stakeholders in the child welfare system from throughout the state met for the last two years to develop a framework to improve the system for families and children. The presenters explained that key "stakeholders" in the child welfare system (CWS) from throughout the state, were brought together over the last two years to discuss how to improve the system for the children and families served.

APRIL PRESENTATION: HOME VISITATION AS A STRATEGY TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE: REFLECTIONS FROM RESEARCH IN SAN DIEGO, DENVER, AND HAWAII
John Landsverk, Ph.D. from the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center discussed the results of studies on home visitation programs. The presentation highlighted the design differences in the studies conducted in three locations San Diego, Hawaii, and Denver. The San Diego and Hawaii studies used paraprofessionals as home visitors. The Denver study used nurses as home visitors. Although there are a range of benefits gained through home visiting, according to these studies using nurses yield better outcomes than those using paraprofessionals. Currently the East Region utilizes the proven OLDS Nurse Home Visitation Program.

MAY PRESENTATION: FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAM (FVP)
Probation Officer Margo Bower explained that this program has been in place since 1994 and is a collaboration between HHSA Childrens Services and the Probation Department. Reunification cases that have one or more parents on felony probation may be assigned jointly to one of three out stationed probation officers and one of five protective services workers that are part of the FVP team.

JUNE PRESENTATION: OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE ACADEMY

Donna Pence presented an overview of The Southern Region Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA). The Academy provides a comprehensive, competency based in-service training program for the public child welfare staff of five Southern California counties (Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego).

JULY PRESENTATION: CHILD WELFARE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Patric Ashby, Director of Child Welfare Services presented an overview of current issues in San Diego County Child Welfare. He also led a discussion with members on community concerns and issues.

SEPTEMBER PRESENTATION: CHILD WELFARE REDESIGN/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR CHILD WELFARE

SDSU School of Social Work Center for Professional Excellence facilitated a session on Child Welfare Redesign and the San Diego Plan for Child Welfare Services to gather input and comments from this Committee on the proposed plan.

OCTOBER PRESENTATION: INTERNET SAFETY: PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN FROM THE DARK SIDE

San Diego County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force presented on their program and efforts to combat the threat of offenders who use the Internet to sexually exploit children.

NOVEMBER PRESENTATION: LIVING AND WORKING WITH TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN

Group viewed a videotape of Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D. of Houston's Child Trauma Academy followed by a discussion session. The videotape presents in-depth information on effective skills for those who are "on the front lines" of care giving for traumatized and maltreated children.

Southern Regional Child Abuse Prevention Coalition:

Office of Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention has organized regional meetings for Child Abuse Prevention Councils to provide technical assistance and strengthen the councils. San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, Imperial and San Diego form the Southern region. The mission statement for the group is: "The Southern Regional Child Abuse Coalition is an inter county coalition to prevent child abuse by coordinating efforts, leveraging resources, and raising awareness."



Workgroups:

Cultural Competency: Diversity Schoolhouse is a monthly training series designed to help front-line workers within the social services and law enforcement fields improve their communication with and understanding of various ethnic, cultural, religious, and other diverse groups in our community. This training is sponsored by San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families-Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Committee; the Union of Pan Asian Communities; the Alliance for African Assistance; and the Public Child Welfare Academy.

In 2003, the Cultural Competency Workgroup sponsored the following Diversity Schoolhouse trainings:

March 25, Taiwanese Community & the Samoan/Filipino Communities

April 29, Afghan Community

May 29, Somali Community

June 24, Samoan Community

August 26, Serbian Community

September 30, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning Youth

October 28, was canceled due to the wildfires throughout the County

November 18, Disabled Community

Media and Public Awareness: Promotes public awareness of prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. In 2003, over 1,000 pieces of information on parenting, recognizing stages of development, and child abuse prevention were distributed in English and Spanish. To promote Child Abuse Awareness Month, the Workgroup had a booth at Children's Day in the Park, an Annual Family Event held in Balboa Park on April 3. A calendar of Family Events for the month was distributed along with other materials on parenting.

Parent Education Task Force: Provides an opportunity for parent educators to network with one another, learn about new programs, share curriculum and best practices. In April the Task Force organized the 2nd Annual Parenting Conference that was attended by 400 local parents. The Conference celebrated parenthood by offering education and information in creative and entertaining formats.

System Enhancement Workgroup: Works to improve services in communities by developing community capacity for a comprehensive network of opportunities and resources to support the needs of children and their families all along the child welfare continuum. The group has been working with the El Cajon Collaborative to provide a community based multidisciplinary training on child abuse prevention and intervention. The target attendees would be police officers, educators, providers, social workers, and any other community members involved in the lives of children.



Early and Comprehensive Educational Support Committee (ECES)

Purpose: To focus on the need for policies and programs which support children's timely start in school and their continued attendance and academic achievement.

In 2003, the Committee continued to refine the concept of a proposed center that would provide support and training to professionals working with infants and young children, who show signs of attachment disorder, have been exposed to abuse and neglect, are acting out in preschool, and experiencing developmental delay. By intervening early, when social or emotional difficulties are detected, children experience positive early developmental supports, thus reducing later problems. Committee members worked collaboratively to revise and refine a concept paper describing the proposed center titled: "Young Child Institute: San Diego's Hub for Social Emotional Development and School Readiness." The document proposes that a comprehensive interdisciplinary resource center to promote optimal mental health and development of infants, young children and their families be established in San Diego.

The rationale for such a center includes the fact that cutting edge brain research has led to major advances in our knowledge of the importance of the first five years of a child's life. Not only are these the years of major brain growth and development, but also experiences during these years lay the foundation for a lifetime of intelligence, health and the ability to form lasting relationships. Through screening and assessment, young children with social and emotional problems that would compromise their school readiness can be identified at an early age. Without intervention the risk to these children of later school failure, serious emotional problems, criminality, and other negative consequences are greatly increased.

Infant, Preschool, and Family Mental Health is a broad based and cross-disciplinary field that focuses on the social emotional well being of children within the context of early primary relationships. Young children and their caregivers need developmentally appropriate intervention that will prevent more serious, long term emotional and behavioral problems, repair problematic relationships, and help young children develop the emotional skills they need to succeed in school.

The Committee assisted in planning the June 10, 2003, Forum and Strategic Planning Session on The Critical Years: Promoting Healthy Emotional Development in Young Children, which featured Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D. of Houston's Child Trauma Academy. The forum and strategic planning session was co-sponsored by the Commission, First Five Commission, and HHSA Children's Mental Health. In the afternoon Dr. Perry facilitated a strategic planning process on the development of the Young Child Institute for 75 local stakeholders. Key community deficits/needs identified by the participants were professional training, unequal access to services, lack of a qualified work force (including psychiatrists, psychologists, and behavioral health consultants), identification and treatment of maternal depression, and mediation of the affects of domestic violence and poverty. Participants recommended services be neighborhood based with centralized training, cross training, and coordination from a centralized hub. As a result of this meeting the First Five Commission funded a planning study to evaluate the social and emotional needs of young children in San Diego.

Recommendations:

- ☐ Endorse establishment of the "Young Child Institute: San Diego's Hub for Social Emotional Development and School Readiness" to promote research, training, and clinical services for early childhood mental health and development with community partners. This concept paper was previously sent to the Board of Supervisors.
- ☐ Merge this Committee with the HHSA Early Childhood Mental Health Committee to continue to support the development of this proposed Institute in San Diego.

Committee Members:

George Cameron, Ed.D., Chair, National School District
Tamara Crittenden, San Diego Regional Center
Ida Cross, ECS Head Start
Nancy Deutsch, San Diego City Schools Infant Development Program
Nina Garrett, San Diego Regional Center
Gladys Gonzales, ECS Head Start
Sherry Hartwell, Earliest Relationships Network
Sue Manglallan, Farm and Home Advisor
Rev. Nan Mitchell, Ecumenical Council
Darlene Modesto, NHA Head Start
Mona Platt, San Diego City Schools
Sylvia Selverston, Child Care and Development Planning Council
Lola Sherman, ECS Head Start
Patti Shields, YMCA-Childcare Resource Services
Phyllis Tyson, Ph.D., Children's Outpatient Psychiatry
Chris Walsh MFT, Consultant
Tasha Woods, NHA Head Start



Wrap Around Health Committee (WAH)

Purpose: To attend to the need for policies and programs that promote access to appropriate physical and mental health services for children and families.

The plight of children in the dependency system is sobering. In addition to dealing with the physical and emotional trauma of parental abuse or neglect, these children must struggle with numerous changes in their placement and their schools. In fact, in California foster children attend an average of 9 to 10 different schools by age 18. At the least, the issues they face at school range from the difficulties of making new friends and adjusting to new teachers to grappling with delays in enrollment and transfer of their records to problems with lost academic credits when they are moved mid-semester.

--Excerpt from "The Educational Crisis of Children in the Juvenile Court System" by Kathleen A. Kelly, Update, October 2000.

The Committee's work has focused on guiding the Educational Liaison Pilot and monitoring the development of the Foster Youth Information System. The Committee focused on this because, for youth leaving the Child Welfare System, education is their best hope of succeeding in the adult world. The link between placement in out of home care and low academic performance has been documented nationwide.

The Educational Liaison Pilot project was a collaboration of the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Program, Casey Family Programs and Voices for Children. The concept of an educational liaison emerged from the initial research on the educational needs of foster youth conducted by the Education Committee of the Juvenile Court Dependency Policy Group and the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Program. Appointment of a liaison provides a focal point for the coordination of services as well as a focus of accountability. Educational Liaisons work between the child welfare system, probation, care providers, and schools to assist and support the educational needs of foster youth transitioning from one placement to another.

The Wrap Around Health Committee provided oversight of the Pilot and completed the evaluation. The highlights of the results are presented below; an evaluation report of the pilot is being developed. The FYS data cited is from the Evaluation of the *Foster Youth Services Program 2002-3003* conducted by Research Solutions Group. It is important to emphasize that this Pilot must be viewed within a larger context of efforts to reform the foster care system in San Diego County. Collaboration and interagency commitment to improving outcomes for foster youth is a strength for this community.

Significant progress has been made in the effort to develop the Web based health and education passport system for all San Diego County foster youth. Foster Youth Services (FYS) tested a prototype, which was used as an internal system for FYS. The Foster Youth Information System (FYIS) was initially developed to create a centralized location to gather and maintain health and education information for foster youth residing in Licensed Children's Institutions. As of January 2004, FYIS has approximately 2200 files on foster children of which 1517 are for youth either residing in long-term group home placements or short-term detention beds, 111 are foster youth who have aged-out of the system, and 443 are for children whose educational rights information was provided to FYS. Resulting from a strong collaborative commitment FYIS will become a secured Web based system with limited access for social workers, probation officers, and school district designees to ensure timely enrollment in the appropriate school. One of the important reasons for accurate, up-to-date health and education records is to improve educational outcomes and increase higher education options for our foster youth. An Educational Liaison is the person who provides the link between the

database and the students. An Educational Liaison has knowledge and understanding of both the child welfare system and local school systems.

Educational Liaisons have duties in two main areas 1) assisting foster youth when they change placement, often leading to a change in school placement and 2) providing on-going support to youth/caregivers around educational issues. Additionally, the FYS Educational Liaisons are responsible for coordinating local collaborative meetings with administrators from all participating group homes and school districts. Specific tasks of an Educational Liaison:

- ☐ Gather, analyze and assure records are transferred in a timely manner to the new school
- ☐ Ensure appropriate school placement and access to tutoring, vocational, mentoring and other services
- ☐ Increase the knowledge and ability of the caregivers to navigate school systems, and become advocates for children in their care
- ☐ Attend individual education planning meetings
- ☐ Provide systemic cross training and serve as a link to improve communications between educators, child welfare staff and caregivers
- ☐ Facilitate open communication between caregivers, schools, social workers, and CASA's (Court Appointed Special Advocates) to ensure optimal education opportunities for foster care students

In June 2001, FYS created an Educational Liaison position to serve as a link between group homes and school districts in South County. Casey Family Programs developed the Coaches/Liaisons Advocating for Student Success Program (CLASS). The CLASS Program educated and assisted youth and foster parents regarding school issues for youth placed in foster homes within the San Diego Unified School District. Casey Family Programs provided staff support to FYS by obtaining and providing data entry of health and education records into the Foster Youth Information System. In Fall 2002, Voices for Children established an Educational Liaison position to work with youth in short-term Licensed Children's Institutions within the San Diego Unified School District and served by Juvenile Court Community Schools. FYS reorganized staff positions to create an Educational Liaison position to serve foster youth residing or detained in Licensed Children's Institutions located within San Diego Unified School District. Voices For Children and FYS Educational Liaisons worked in close partnership to serve as many youth as possible. FYS has provided training and support to both of these programs as well as worked to engage the school districts and the residential program at the highest administrative levels. Due to budget constraints Casey Family Programs and Voices for Children are no longer able to support an educational liaison position.

The Pilot demonstrated a direct benefit to individual clients served. Students were assisted in placement issues, disciplinary issues, meeting graduation requirements, college opportunities, and support services. Foster Youth Services Educational Liaisons assisted 294 youth, Voices for Children Educational Liaison 140 youth and Casey Family programs 5 foster homes. Through the combined efforts of FYS and Voices for Children 434 youth in licensed children's institutions received services which resulted in more youth in off grounds educational placements and more appropriate behavior by many of the youth. Together the three pilot agencies provided training to 500 individuals increasing the knowledge of school district personnel, classroom teachers, foster parents, social workers, group home staff and Court Appointed Special Advocates on educational issues for foster children. Group homes reported that educational liaisons had improved their access to necessary records, and contributed to improvement in students' behavior, attendance, achievement, and motivation.

The success of the pilot sites for youth in licensed children's institutions demonstrates the benefits of an educational liaison in supporting youth and providers. One cautionary finding was the lack of referrals for the Casey Family Programs. This appears to illustrate the challenge of supporting foster parents without overburdening them. The services of an educational liaison must be seamless and an integral part of the system working with children and foster families. The San Diego County Office of Education's Foster Youth Services Program with a legislative mandate to serve wards and dependents in licensed children's institutions appears to be the best fit for providing education liaison services. Foster Youth Services is funded to provide educational services to wards and dependents residing in licensed children's institutions. Legislative action is needed to expand the mandate and funding to support the ability of Foster Youth Services Programs to serve all students in foster care

Recommendations:

- ☐ Ensure responsible agencies comply with current laws and policies to support school success by transferring complete school records, checking students in and out of school, and designating a person with education decision-making.
- ☐ Support the integration and development of a seamless approach to meeting educational needs of wards and dependents to support educating social workers, probation officers, and foster parents in their initial training curriculum on educational issues. Provide ongoing interdisciplinary forums and trainings to continually update knowledge and improve performance.
- ☐ Support and seek funding for the development of a network of Educational Liaisons to ensure foster youth receive the most appropriate educational services and placement.
- ☐ Merge into one Countywide Education Committee in order to consolidate efforts of the following committees: Commission on Children, Youth and Families Wrap-Around Health Committee, Education Committee of the Juvenile Court Dependency Policy Group and the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Advisory Committee.
- ☐ Charge the Education Committee with ensuring accountability of the systems by reporting annually to the Board of Supervisors on educational outcomes for youth in foster care and information on performance of the system.

Committee Members:

Barbara Ryan, Chair, San Diego County School Boards Association

Sandra Boelter, Consumer Representative

Tammy Burmeister, HHSA-Residential Services

Cindy Charron, Voices for Children

Ana Espana, Office of the Public Defender

Tracy Fried, SDCOE, Foster Youth Services

Nancy Kail, HHSA-Policy and Program Support Division

Becky Kennedy, Casey Family Programs

Sara Montrose, Voices for Children

Judy Quinn, HHSA-CHDP Foster Care

Cory Schaller, Voices for Children

Marilyn Stewart, Casey Family Programs

Supportive Housing Ad-hoc

Purpose: To focus on the development of policies and programs to assure the housing needs of children and families are met and receive sustainable support.

Housing Resources for Emancipating Foster Youth

The committee would like to formally thank the current leadership of Patti Rahiser, Cathi Palatella, Dolores Diaz, and Karen Kerschmann for pulling together this last year to facilitate bringing this program to full capacity and thereby the greatest number of youth have been afforded access to this program, their dedication to solving challenges in creative ways, and their willingness to enroll the community and incorporate feedback from this committee. The program improvements this year included allowing roommates, standardizing program administration, and program design changes.

Two community partners, the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation (CAPF) and New Alternatives established additional housing units for these youth. CAPF in collaboration with YMCA Family Services opened Mary's House in Escondido for 6 young women emancipating from foster care. At San Pasqual Academy, New Alternatives opened two adjacent houses for 10 youth graduating from the Academy.

In 2003, the committee continued to monitor the County's scattered site housing programs. The County Independent Living Skills Unit housing program has been operational since June 2001. This program has served approximately 110 young adults.

The original Emancipated Foster Youth Housing Program (EFYHP) was in operation from June 2001 through November 2003. This program allowed youth to participate for 18 months while paying gradually increasing portions of their rent. Overall, EFYHP provided 48 youth with rental assistance through this housing program.

Additional federal funding was identified in 2002. The Health and Human Services Agency and Housing and Community Development partnered to provide an on-going housing program for this population, titled the HOME program. Initiated in July 2002, the new 24-month housing program is based on a Section 8 model, with youth paying 30% of their income towards rent. This program has a goal of serving 52 emancipated foster youth.

Preliminary stats from the 2003 HOME program reveal encouraging results. Forty-four percent of youth in this program are presently enrolled in college.

Forty-nine emancipated youth are currently participating in the HOME program. A total of 55 have benefited from the program, and there are 43 youth waiting to gain access to the program. It is anticipated interest will continue to exceed resources presently allocated to this program as approximately 200 youth age out of foster care each year in San Diego leaving as many as 800 youth (ages 18-21) at any one time who may be eligible for this program.

In 2004, the Committee will evaluate the HOME program model while considering the following factors:

- 1) High cost of rent (average \$822)
- 2) Limited earning capacity of youth (average \$609 per month)
- 3) The price of housing in the San Diego rental market coupled with the HOME program model (30% of income towards rent) and associated costs, average youth portion rent of \$187, and the program paying an average of \$641 per month per youth.
- 4) The current model may not be the best way to encourage hard work and may actually present a disincentive to earn more income.
- 5) The committee will explore other rent subsidy models to insure the incentives for emancipated youth are aligned with graduation to independence and coupled with a desire to help the greatest number of youth.

A Strategic Planning Meeting was held on July 9, 2003, sponsored by this Committee, Child Welfare Services Independent Living Skills Unit and Juvenile Court to obtain community input on the housing needs of this population. Forty-two people representing government and non-profit agencies, as well as current and former foster youth attended. A white paper titled "Housing Needs of San Diego's Emancipating Foster Youth" was written based on this meeting and other research. A copy of this paper was previously sent to the Board of Supervisors and is available from the Commission.

Based on ongoing Committee meetings and input derived from the July 9 Strategic Planning Meeting, the following recommendations were developed to improve the transition of foster youth to independence.

- ☐ Support ongoing funding for the HOME program in the Department of Housing and Community Development Annual Plan.
- ☐ Continue seeking program design improvements to the present income-based Section 8 model to ensure wise utilization of monies and that youth are taking positive steps towards self-sufficiency.
- ☐ Continue development of more definitive Case Management Standards to ensure housing is not a temporary band-aid, rather, an opportunity to further develop life skills and economic self-sufficiency.
- ☐ Recommend HHSA continue to collect data and evaluate outcomes for transitioning and emancipating youth in conjunction with current efforts in Child Welfare Services on Outcome Measurement. The current enhancement of the Service Point database system, which is used in gathering and tracking data regarding ILS services to youth including emancipated youth, will provide more detailed information on this population. Data will be collected on the needs of this population and the effectiveness of the housing programs for transitioning youth.
- ☐ Encourage the use of existing community resources to give all emancipated foster youth the opportunity to have a mentor.

SAFE (Sober and Friendly Environment) Housing for Reunifying Families

This Committee serves as the oversight body to the HHSA Safe Housing Initiative and continues to support the development of SAFE Housing units for reunifying families in the dependency system. This year an informal needs assessment for this population was completed. The analysis estimated 330 families are in need of housing. Housing for this population is extremely difficult due to the fact that federally funded programs are not "friendly" to people in recovery. Programs formally funded by HUD for Family Unification have been exhausted regionally. No additional "Notices of Funding Availability" for this population have been published.

Recommendations:

- ☐ Develop a white paper to articulate the housing needs for this population in San Diego, which will outline current resources, challenges and needs.
- ☐ HCD continue to respond to and disseminate information to community partners regarding Notice's of Funding Availability for special needs populations as outlined in the County's Housing Element and Consolidated Plan.
- ☐ Identify ongoing stable funding source to support the SAFE Housing Program Initiative.

Overall Recommendation:

The Committee recognizing the challenge of affordable housing in San Diego County recommends the status of this committee be modified from ad-hoc to standing committee in order to develop policies and programs to assure the housing needs of children and families are met and receive sustainable support.

Committee Members:

Jeanette Day, Chair, Representative, Supervisorial District Three

Michelle Bendetto, San Diego Legal Aide Society

Sandra Boelter, Consumer Representative

Dolores Diaz, County Department of Housing and Community Development

Matthew Doherty, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Lois Kenneally, Casey Family Programs

Lorna Kindred, HHSA-Central Region

Elizabeth McPhail, Private Citizen

Riley McRae, Representative, Central Region Collaborative

Marjorie Musgrave, Consumer Representative

Cathi Palatella, HHSA Child Welfare Services

Patti Rahiser, HHSA Child Welfare Services

Donna Rodriguez, HHSA-Policy and Program Support Division

Rhonda Sarmiento, HHSA-Policy and Program Support Division

Marilyn Stewart, Casey Family Programs

Legislative Responsibilities

Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Since 1994 the Commission has been the Board designated advisory body responsible for planning the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program formerly called Family Preservation and Support Program. The Commission also has oversight and planning responsibilities for three other funding sources: Children's Trust Fund, Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, and Community Based Family Resource Program Funds. In fulfillment of its advisory role, the Commission received approval from the Board of Supervisors in January 2003, to develop a Comprehensive Plan for Child Welfare Services to plan for a continuum of services utilizing these funding sources. The Commission engaged the Academy for Professional Excellence in the School of Social Work at San Diego State to develop, with extensive involvement of community stakeholders, a plan for child welfare services. The plan builds on existing plans to guide the development of an integrated system. The outcomes emphasized are consistent with recent federal and state guidelines towards performance measurement. The planning process consisted of surveys, focus groups, ad-hoc committees, reviews of existing regional strategic plans, as well as input from existing committees. Two large community-planning sessions were held; attendees included County staff, community providers and members, law enforcement, judges, foster and kinship parents, and others. On July 31, 2003, a full day session was attended by 110 stakeholders and on August 20, 2003, 47 stakeholders attended a follow up half-day session. In September 2003, seven community meetings were held throughout San Diego with a total of 174 participants.

Based on the principle that the safety of children is the community's responsibility, the vision, mission and guiding principles for the Comprehensive Plan were developed at community planning sessions with input from the Commission and the Child Welfare Advisory Group. The vision places a priority on preventing child maltreatment before it occurs. The guiding principles in the Plan emphasize a family-centered strength based delivery system, which recognizes the importance of meeting the basic needs of housing and health. Child Welfare Services is using this framework to develop a statement of work for new contracts utilizing Promoting Safe and Stable Families; Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment; Children's Trust Fund; and Community Based Family Resource Center Funding.

Interagency Children's Services (SB 997)

For purposes of compliance with the Welfare and Institutions Code, Chapter 12.8, Section 18986, the Commission is designated as the SB 997 Interagency Children and Youth Services Council. This legislation charges the Commission to support development of a comprehensive delivery system for local services provided to children and youth. This responsibility is the cornerstone of the Commission's mission and ongoing committee work. Healthy Start legislation (SB620) requires the local SB 997 Council to review Healthy Start grant applications from all San Diego County school districts. In addition the Commission provides staff support to San Diego's Healthy Start Consortium, which meets on a quarterly basis. Meeting topics in 2003 included the San Diego County Child and Family Health and Well Being Report Card 2002, Marketing Your Program, Child Welfare Redesign, and State Family Resource Center Association. Healthy Start is designed to serve children, their family members, and the community. San Diego has approximately 40 Healthy Start programs, which serve over 100 schools providing school-linked health and social services.

Child Abuse Prevention

For purposes of compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code 18992 and related sections in February 2002, the Board of Supervisors designated the Commission to undertake the functions of a local child abuse prevention council, including matters related to the Children's Trust Fund. As the local community child abuse council, the Commission has oversight responsibility for the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Program and Community Based Family Resource and Support Program Plans. In fulfillment of this duty the Commission conducted the planning process outlined above. The Commission convenes the Child Abuse Prevention Committee monthly. Membership includes representatives from juvenile justices, law enforcement, education, medicine, social services, and parents. Each meeting consists of a one-hour training and workgroup meetings. Four work groups meet on the following issues: cultural competency, public awareness, parent education, and system enhancement. The Cultural Competency workgroup sponsored a monthly training series for frontline workers. The Parent Education Task Force sponsored an annual conference, which was attended by 400 parents in 2003. In addition, over 1,000 people attended trainings/conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the Commission in 2003.

Youth Pilot Project

For purposes of application and participation in the SB 1352 Youth Pilot Program formerly known as AB 1741 under Section 18987 of the Welfare and Institutions Code the Commission on Children, Youth, and Families is designated as the responsible body for planning, implementing and evaluating the blended funding pilot program. The Commission plans, implements and monitors this Initiative as the designated Child and Family Interagency Coordinating Council. In 2001, the County submitted a waiver under the auspices of this legislation to the State to support the Safe Housing for reunifying families. In 2002, the State requested additional information leaving the waiver in a pending status. In April 2003, the State denied the waiver. The denial letter stated that the County had the flexibility to use either their CalWORKS Single Allocation funds or Performance Funds for housing subsidy programs.

Signs of Support Program

The Board of Supervisors approved the Signs of Support Program in November 1997. This program raises money by selling advertising on selected County vehicles. In 2003, the Commission allocated FY 2002-03 Signs of Support funds in the amount of \$11,657.78 to San Diego County Parks Society to administer to eligible school-aged children for sports and/or enrichment activity programs. San Diego County Parks Society distributed \$11,498 to 60 foster and low-income youth for activities such as: football, soccer, and basketball leagues; high school sports; cheerleading; school trips; and summer, church and specialized camps.



CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS - 2003

FEBRUARY 3, 2003, TRAINING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

Over 225 professionals attended this training that featured Jeffrey L. Edleson, Ph.D. of the University of Minnesota School of Social Work. Dr. Edleson discussed the co-occurrence of child maltreatment and women battering, and the potential impact that exposure to violence has on child development. He reviewed recent research on co-occurring violence to children and women.

FEBRUARY 23, 2003, HONORING CULTURAL STRENGTHS: PATHWAYS TO BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES (co-sponsored with several organizations)

A countywide collaboration to improve awareness of ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse communities throughout San Diego sponsored this one-day conference. Attendees included social service providers, law enforcement, judicial personal, mental health professionals, and educators.

APRIL 4, 2003, TRAINING: CO-INCIDENCE OF CHILD ABUSE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

This one-day training, co-sponsored with the Chadwick Center at Children's Hospital, brought together 100 professionals from the mental health treatment community, the substance abuse treatment and child welfare services to address issues of mutual concern in treating children and families addressing the co-incidence of child and family maltreatment and substance abuse.

JUNE 10, 2003, THE CRITICAL YEARS: PROMOTING HEALTHY EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Dr. Bruce Perry of Houston's Child Trauma Academy presented to an audience of 325 foster parents, childcare providers, social workers, mental health providers and other professionals. Dr. Perry presented information on how early life experiences shape children and our culture. He emphasized safety structure, nurture, and enrichment during the early years of life can result in a lifetime of productivity whereas chaos, neglect and violence in early childhood result in under developed brains. This forum was co-sponsored with Children's Mental Health, First Five Commission of San Diego, and San Diego Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled.

In the afternoon 75 stakeholders participated in a Strategic Planning Session with Dr. Perry on meeting the Social-Emotional Needs of Young Children in San Diego.

APRIL 26, 2003 PARENTING CONFERENCE: "Celebrating Families"

The 2nd Annual Parenting Conference was a huge success, with 400 parents attending; 37 workshops, 26 educational booths and vendors, and 25 volunteers. About 70 parents utilized the Spanish interpretation services. The evaluations were very positive, including this comment from one parent that attended:

"There was a wonderful keynote speaker who spoke while we were enjoying a continental breakfast. Then attendees were able to choose from a wide variety of one-hour workshops. Some of the ones we chose were 'Parents Working as a Team' and 'How to Raise an Independent, Self-Reliant Child'. My husband also attended a session just for dads. The whole event was very well organized and the presenters were excellent."

JUNE 25, 2003, HOMELESS YOUTH SUMMIT

This one-day Summit on the issue of homeless youth in East County was co-sponsored with Grossmont Union High School District and the El Cajon Collaborative. Commission members guided the planning, conducted workshops and facilitated panel presentations. A cross section of educators, community, parents, law enforcement, social workers, and service providers attended to learn the extent of the problem and programs that are available to serve these youth.

JULY 9, 2003, STRATEGIC PLANNING HOUSING FOR EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH

The Commission on Children, Youth and Families; Health and Human Services Agency; and Juvenile Court sponsored a Strategic Planning Meeting to get community input on the housing needs of emancipating foster youth. Forty-two people representing government and non-profit agencies, as well as current and former foster youth, attended

OCTOBER 8, OCTOBER 16, OCTOBER 21, AND NOVEMBER 6, 2003, 6th ANNUAL SAFE SCHOOL INSTITUTE: "STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTIONS, SHARING RESPONSIBILITY: OUR COMMUNITIES/OUR SCHOOLS REGIONAL CONFERENCES

These regional forums were a collaboration of the San Diego County Office of Education, the Commission and Health and Human Services Office of Violence Prevention. This series of mini conferences were designed to provide a forum for discussion focused on local needs and strengthening of local partnerships to support students and their families. All participants were given a copy of a book by local author Dr. Ken Druck titled, *How to Talk to Your Kids About School Violence*. County Supervisor Ron Roberts arranged for each participant to receive a copy of this book.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2003, FALL EDUCATION SERIES - FOSTER YOUTH EDUCATION: IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Commission co-sponsored this four part training series for social workers, foster parents, relative caregivers and the courts. The participants learned how to navigate the Education System, the unique needs of foster youth, special education and other education laws, Individualized Education and 504 Plans, and strategies for dealing with school problems.

DECEMBER 3, 2003, CHILD ABUSE MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

This training was co-sponsored with California Department of Social Services and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, featured an overview of California child abuse reporting, indicators of child abuse, and responsibilities of a mandated reporter.



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